

## **A Compelling Model for Strengthening Food Safety Systems in the Asia Pacific Region and Beyond**

To assure food safety, food security, and public health, there is a need to build food safety capacity in food systems in a sustainable way to achieve transformational change. Work in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has been focused on this goal since 2007, with a model developed in cooperation with the World Bank that has the potential to be customized and rolled out globally. Currently, donors are being sought to contribute to the work necessary to deepen and validate this model through the establishment of a Multi-Donor Trust Fund. The rationale for using APEC as the model for global release is described below.

**Strengthening food safety is critical to improving public health outcomes, enabling producers to trade food commodities with regional and global partners and ensuring greater food security.**

- **Impact on Public Health:** *Up to one-third of the population of developed countries is affected by food borne illness each year and the problem is even more wide spread in developing countries. The World Health Assembly Declaration of 2010 has confirmed that food borne disease continues to represent a serious threat to the health of millions of people in the world, particularly those in developing countries with poor nutritional status.*
- **Impact on the Economy:** *The economic impact of food safety incidents can also be severe, affecting both the private sector and governments. Governments face macroeconomic effects, including losses due to productivity, declines in trade and increases in health costs. Small and medium enterprises in the agri-business sector are disproportionately affected by post-harvest losses, loss of domestic and export markets, absenteeism and loss of productivity.*
- **Impact on Food Security:** *There is a critical need to ensure reliable sources of safe food in order to achieve global food security outcomes. Donor strategies to combat food insecurity through agri-business investment activities should address the need for food safety capacity building to be carried out efficiently and effectively.*

The APEC region accounts for 41% of the world population and nearly half of global food production. It is home to the world's largest agricultural producers with total agricultural exports of \$403 billion in 2009. To better ensure the safety of food that is grown, transported, processed and distributed by APEC economies throughout the global food supply chain, priority food safety issues are being addressed through a collaborative process between governments, the private sector, academia, and other food safety experts.

Building food safety capacity throughout the food control system will bring benefits to public health, global food trade, and food security outcomes. The establishment of public, private and academic partnerships has a critical role in achieving these outcomes.

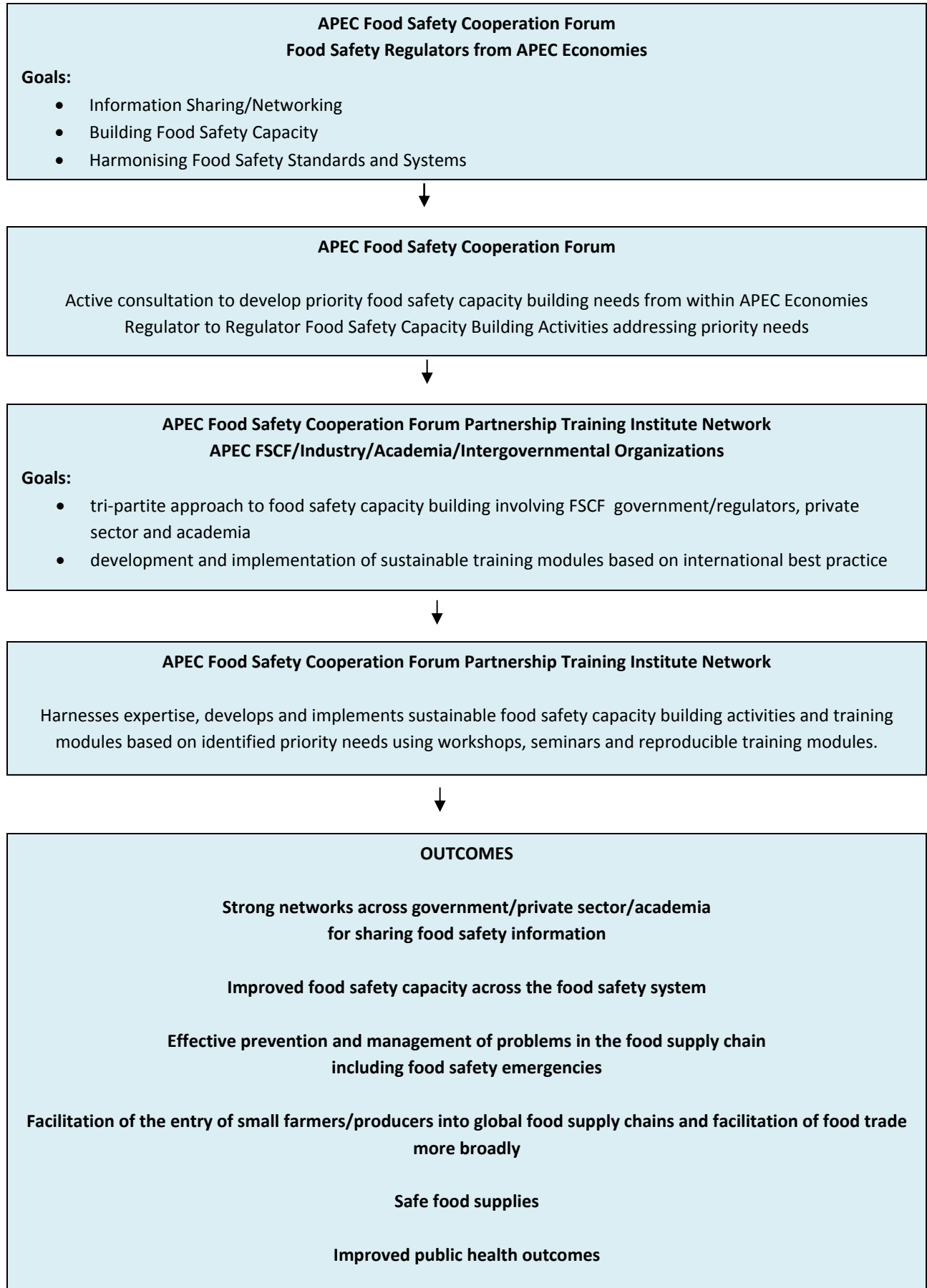
## **The APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum and its Partnership Training Institute Network –**

### **A Model for Future Action**

The Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) and its Partnership Training Institute Network (PTIN), established in 2007 and 2008 respectively, provide a strategic approach to improving food safety in the region, with capacity building a key pillar of their work. The work of the FSCF and its PTIN provides a compelling model for future action in the APEC region and on a global basis. The features of this model that make it compelling are that:

- It provides a unique mechanism for food safety capacity building that utilises a well-established network of decision makers and experts from the regulatory, agriculture and trade agencies; industry and academia from 21 APEC member economies;
- APEC is diverse - geographically, ethnically and economically and it involves all aspects of the food supply chain. As such, it is a distinctive network in which the peer-to-peer model of engagement across experts has been implemented and can be demonstrated as a successful test case for future action in the region and globally;
- Through active consultation, food safety priorities have been developed and regularly updated from the experts within economies. Capacity building activities and training modules are developed and implemented by peer experts to meet this demand in a range of technical areas, as well as areas that support legal and organisational development.
- Capacity building targets stakeholders along the food supply chain including those involved in growing food; transporting and handling food; food processors; national and regional standards and conformance bodies; and regulators.
- Through ongoing evaluation of individual capacity building activities and the incorporation of measures to gauge the impact of the FSCF and PTIN within APEC economies, a base of evidence has been established. This provides a baseline for ongoing metrics.
- The model is built on multi-sectoral partnerships. Through this it encourages system wide action based on identified needs and aims to foster self-sustainable food safety systems in the longer term.

## The FSCF/PTIN Model for Building Capacity across the Food Safety System - How it Works



## **Positive Impacts of the FSCF and its PTIN – Closing the Gaps across APEC**

As a result of the FSCF and the PTIN, significant progress has been made in addressing food safety issues and closing the gaps between APEC economies over the past four years. Prior to 2007, within the APEC region, there was limited communication about food safety issues; no coordination of food safety capacity building activities; and a diverse approach to establishing food safety standards and systems. Since 2007, much progress has been made as a result of the work being undertaken within the FSCF and its PTIN. Specifically:

- The profile of food safety has increased significantly, leveraging support for associated activities;
- APEC economies are integrally linked through the FSCF and PTIN networks, resulting in active communicating and networking about food safety issues;
- Food safety capacity building priorities have been developed from within the economies and agreed upon by the FSCF;
- Capacity building activities are coordinated across the region and respond directly to the demands of the economies;
- Progress has been made towards harmonising food safety standards and systems, in order to promote trade of food and food products within the region.
- The FSCF PTIN has brought in industry and academic expertise in addition to that of the regulators to provide a broader perspective and knowledge on food safety issues, including key public health and trade impacts.

The FSCF and its PTIN have already completed a range of capacity building activities that address identified priority needs. 32 capacity building activities held in 11 economies, involving participants from 21 member economies, throughout the APEC region since 2007. This includes activities on:

- Developing food laws, standards and enforcement systems;
- Risk analysis, along with specific activities on risk assessment, risk management and risk communication;
- Supply chain management;
- Export certificates;
- Assessing food safety capacity building needs of food control systems;
- Food Safety Incident Management, including development of food recall systems; and
- Building laboratory capacity and capability.

The first FSCF PTIN sustainable training modules are in development and will be available for use in late 2011. These modules focus on supply chain management; and supply chain management for the aquaculture sector.

## Positive Impacts as Described by Individual Economies

### *The Republic of the Philippines:*

- Participation by the Philippines in FSCF and PTIN activities has resulted in improvements to its national food safety system including recommendations for a proposed new Food Safety Act, establishment of a national contaminants and residue monitoring control program, and increased competence on managing microbiological risks, development of laws, regulations and standards, risk communication, and food recall.

### *Vietnam*

- Participation by Vietnam in FSCF and PTIN activities has had a positive impact on Vietnam's national food safety system, particularly in its aquaculture and small scale food production sector which established new guidelines on supply chain management based on best practices presented at a PTIN workshop. Vietnam is also currently developing a national Law on Food Safety which will use best practices information from PTIN workshops and PTIN website resources as well as lessons learned from APEC countries.

### *Papua New Guinea*

- Participation by Papua New Guinea in FSCF and PTIN activities has resulted in improvement in PNG's laboratory capacity including obtaining food and water testing equipment for micro and toxin testing from WHO and staff training. Capacity building on harmonizing food safety regulatory systems assisted PNG to review their food legislation and standards to try to meet international standards including development of a risk-based food inspection system.

### *Thailand*

- It has been important for Thailand to have access to technical information and information about national food safety regulatory frameworks from developed member economies. This has enabled the implementation of components of a food safety regulatory framework that are harmonized with international standards.

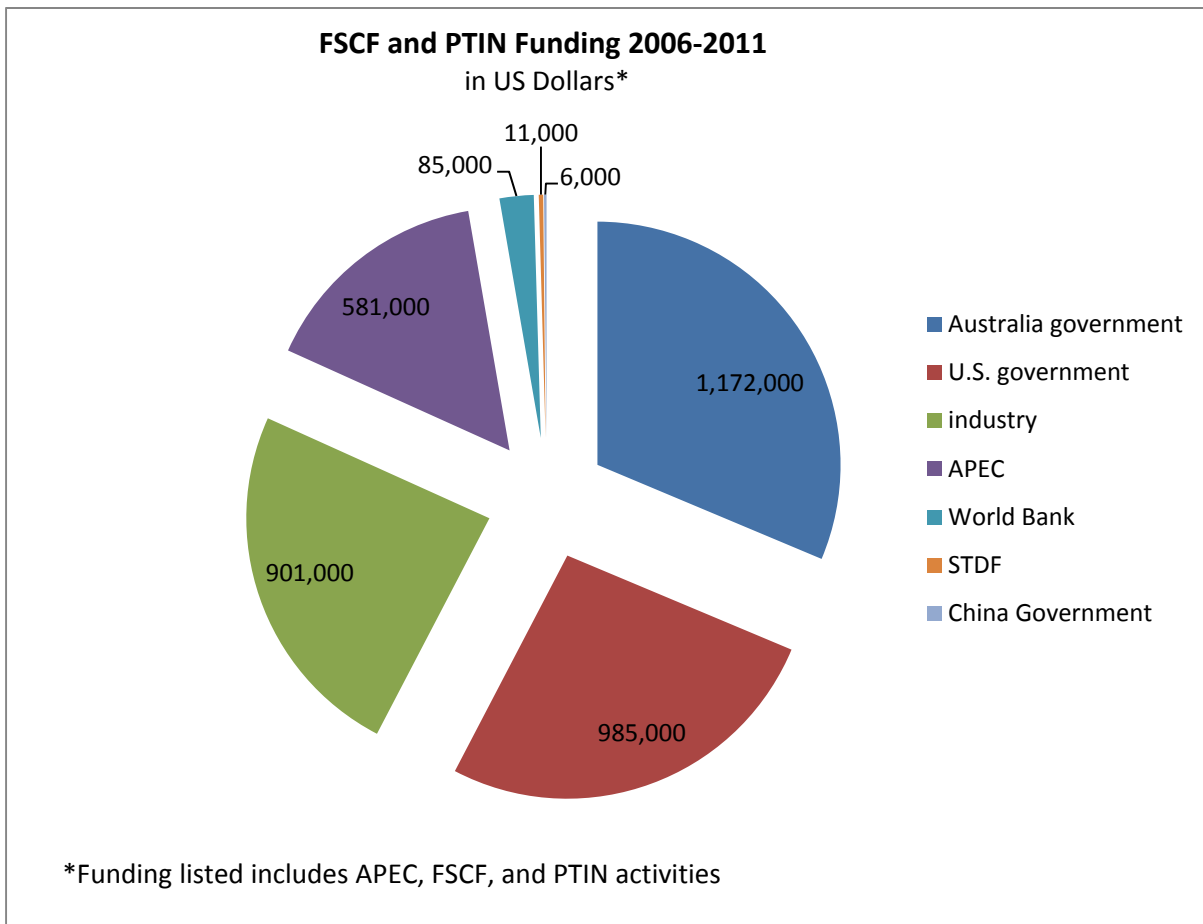
### *Chile*

- Chile is working on its Food Safety Policy and the FSCF and PTIN are very valuable forums for sharing experiences and collaborating with other economies in this aspect of food safety. The private sector is being encouraged to participate in this process so that public/private partnerships are established from the outset. Chile will use its involvement in the FSCF and PTIN to assist farmers and local producers to be involved in capacity building programs.

### Investment in FSCF and PTIN Activities to Date

To date there has been a significant commitment to the work of the FSCF and its PTIN. Australia and China have led this work since its inception and co-chaired the FSCF since its establishment in 2007. The United States initiated the PTIN in 2008 and has also played a key leadership role, along with other APEC economies, the private sector, academia, and international organisations such as the World Bank. This commitment, made over a period of six years, is reflective of the critical importance of improving food safety in the APEC region.

Over US \$3.7 million has been generated for the work of the FSCF and PTIN to date. Funding has been made available from various APEC governments, particularly Australia and the United States as well as the APEC Trade and Investment Liberalization and Facilitation (TILF) fund; industry contributions; and contributions from international organisations such as the World Bank; and the Standards and Trade Development Facility. A broad summary of contributions to date is provided in the chart below and provides evidence that the work of the FSCF and PTIN has had strong support from a range of partners who see clear and positive benefits of investing in food safety capacity building to both trade and public health.



## A Requirement for Ongoing Support and Investment

***There is high level support for the continued work of the FSCF and its PTIN. Significant progress has been made, but efforts must be scaled up and sustained to have a larger and lasting impact including encouraging ongoing high level commitment of government, private sector, and academic stakeholders.***

***A commitment must be made to:***

- *Develop and implement a 2-3 year plan for ongoing food safety capacity building that reflects the intent of the MOU for Food Safety Capacity Building between the FSCF and the World Bank*
- *Continue to promote partnerships with the World Bank as well as other government, private sector and donor organisations*
- *Establish a Multi-donor Trust Fund for regional and global food safety capacity building, using the APEC FSCF PTIN tri-partite model as a pilot*
- *Continue to advance regulatory cooperation among APEC economies using best practice methods for establishing food safety control systems*
- *Continue to develop the FSCF PTIN network of industry, academic, and regulatory food safety experts*
- *Develop accessible, sustainable, scalable, and replicable training modules focused on priority food safety capacity building needs*
- *Promote the APEC FSCF PTIN model for implementation in other regions of the world*

*For more information, please see our website at <http://fscf-ptin.apec.org>*